

we need to fix them soon. We need to address these problems and reauthorize No Child Left Behind quickly.

Thank you for yielding your time, and I yield back.

Mr. McKEON. Thank you. Now I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Walberg).

Mr. Walberg. I want to thank my colleague and friend and ranking member from California (Mr. McKeon) for allowing this discussion tonight, and to start off I think by portraying reality here of the billions of dollars that have been invested. And I certainly wouldn't say wasted, but the investment of billions of dollars into education certainly has not, according to this chart, and I think reality, shown the impact we would have dreamed of, expected and desired.

I think that is why the discussion that we are having tonight is so good, especially centered around reauthorizing a major component that there has been a lot of hopes and dreams about, No Child Left Behind, producing in this country a greater quality and achievement in education.

I don't pride myself in being a contrarian, but on this issue, I am somewhat of a contrarian.

□ 2145

I hearken back to the Northwest Ordinance, that great statement that is included in many of our State Constitutions that says religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

And I think that last section, where it says schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged, is where we are interested in tonight. It is our concern. It is our desire to encourage schools and the means of education.

That statement, that directive from the Northwest Ordinance is found, as I said, in many State Constitutions including that of my own State of Michigan.

The fact of the matter is that as a result of many redundant programs, well meaning though they may be, and yet programs and mandates that are put on our system, we have encumbered education to the point that it is very difficult on the ground in the unique classrooms that we have in every school district, with every student in the classroom who is a different student than the student sitting next to them.

Having three children and having gone through the public education system, the private education, and alternative system at some point in time in their educational experience, I know that even those three children from the same family learned in different ways and thankfully had the options available to them that met their needs at each step along the way, at least as much as possible, allowing achievement.

So, frankly, as we come to reauthorizing No Child Left Behind, it would be my preference that we would not; that we would end No Child Left Behind and turn it back to the States, turn our dollars and our interests toward giving opportunities for higher education, which in this country sets the standard for the rest of the world. Industry and business technology, working hand in hand with higher education, then to be an assist to establish patterns for our elementary and secondary education to bring them to the point of a completion, at least to that point, so that they can go on into higher education, trade schools, or in industry and business, and achieve, knowing reality and to a point as well, I understand that No Child Left Behind will most likely be reauthorized in some form. So, for that reason I would certainly plead for flexibility.

Having done that, I have cosponsored legislation that has been given the name A-PLUS, which would allow that flexibility for States to be brought forward, that would allow States that had taken a purpose statement to produce schools and the means of education that would foster growth in our government, in our society, in our educational classrooms, that would give opportunities for States to opt out of No Child Left Behind having proven that they had in place a plan for providing data that was good, evaluation that was quality, and an educational program that was moving toward excellence.

For example, I was the product of public education all the way through and even entering into university. My mother and three aunts were public school educators, beginning most of them in one-room schools teaching, and then moving into the Chicago public school system.

My daughter-in-law is a public school teacher on the south side of Chicago, a gifted teacher, a teacher who her first year taught as a full-time substitute because of the need in a special needs classroom where the teacher, out of frustration one day, got up, walked out of the class, and never came back. My daughter-in-law was given the opportunity to work with these young people who needed an education, needed someone who would invest themselves in their little lives, a fourth grade classroom.

My daughter-in-law Erin absolutely loved her first year of teaching as a substitute, a full-time substitute. She had the freedom without some of the paperwork, some of the criteria, both of the Illinois and Chicago public school systems, but also No Child Left Behind. She saw achievement with the opportunity to meet with parents, to provide expectations, but also the opportunity to work in partnership with them and working with these special needs students to see improvement along the way.

Thankfully, she received a full-time appointment to that same classroom

the next year as a full-time teacher, and soon found out that, with the weight of paperwork and regulation that was redundant upon each other coming from the Federal on down through the State and through the Chicago system as well, she was greatly frustrated to the point of wondering whether she was cut out to be a teacher. Fortunately, with good counsel from her administration and, I must admit, from my wife and myself as well, she continued and saw impact. And yet, the frustrations of not having the flexibility to deal with individual needs almost scuttled her attempt at teaching.

One final point I would make, Mr. McKeon, is from my own experience in going through seven No Child Left Behind hearings across my district in each of the seven counties, and having teachers, administrators, school board members and parents speak to the issue of No Child Left Behind and reauthorization, speak to the issue of highly qualified teachers and the frustration that that produces in some of our smaller school districts, rural school districts in trying to deal with that, yet having qualified teachers who are achieving well in the classroom, and yet because of the requirement for highly qualified that No Child Left Behind puts in place, the frustration that comes.

I stood in a special needs classroom at a local intermediate school district, and I watched a young man who, as I understand it, had no mental difficulties but great physical difficulties to the point that the only way that he could be administered a test was by verbal administration of that test from his teacher. And with his blinking of his eye once for yes, two for no, he took the test. But then I watched as the teacher went through that same test a second time to make sure that she had achieved answering right according to what he had indicated. Now, that adds time. And when you add redundancies and lack of flexibility all the way from the Federal Government on down, it frustrates education and it takes away the opportunity of some of these great teachers out there and committed parents, school boards, and students to meet the needs of their students, in their classrooms, in their communities.

So my friend from California, I would applaud you in pushing further that, not only would we most likely reauthorize, but that we would produce the flexibility that allows creativity to abound in our classrooms, parents to be involved, teachers who want to teach and not just be social workers or mother confessors at times, but to be in the role of teaching and working side by side with parents and the flexibility that can only come by understanding that schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

Mr. McKeon. I thank the gentleman. And as Mr. Davis said earlier, in the meetings that he held with his people